

Wing Tips

108th Air Refueling Wing
New Jersey Air National Guard

November/December 2008
Volume 8, Issue 10



Commander's Column

Wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday

By Lt. Col. Patrick Kennedy
108th Maintenance Squadron
commander

The holiday season is here and this is the time to spend time with your family and friends. We find ourselves at the end of another busy year and wonder how the months passed by so fast. Take the holiday season to slow down and enjoy the hustle and bustle that comes with this time of year.

This time of year is not always an easy time for everyone. Be extra vigilant in caring for those that feel lonely and sad during this time of year. Extra attention can mean a big difference in how some folks get through the holidays.

It is also a time that can be dangerous with extra lights on our houses and with inside decorations. Pay attention to all the safety warnings that come out this time of year. Disregarding the warnings that surround our many holiday traditions can cause damage and terrible heartache.

Next year will bring many more challenges that we will work through. We have several inspections on our plate over the next 12 months and the preparations have already started. Our Wing will receive a UCI, an ASEV, and an MSEP inspection simultaneously in

September 2009.

This will be the most comprehensive inspection ever received at one time. It will evaluate every aspect of the Wing's mission.

Additionally, we will be in our aviation AEF deployment cycle that will require the deployment of hundreds of personnel. It will be our first deployment as an "R" model unit and we look forward to the opportunity of fulfilling our role in the Global War on Terrorism with our new weapons system.

So, as we wrap up another busy year and look forward to more exciting challenges in 2009, it is appropriate to take this holiday season to catch your breath. The pace of next year will be fast and furious. On behalf of myself and my wife, Stacy, I encourage you to truly enjoy your holiday season and spend it with all of your loved ones. I thank you for your continued service and



dedication. Focus on the time with your family and friends this holiday season and enjoy it safely. Best wishes in the new year!

In the spirit of family, my two children, son, JT, 11, and daughter Kaleigh, 9, have a holiday message for you all to enjoy. Happy Holidays.

Jarrett "JT" Kennedy writes:

Thanks for all of you who took and take your time away from your family for the country. I know you work so hard! It makes me proud to see my father, his friends, all of you,

do what you do best! From meetings to paperwork, I know you try hard to get what needs to be done. Enjoy your Holiday with family or friends. Maybe even both! Just make sure of one thing. You never celebrate a holiday alone. Happy Christmas, Happy Hanukah and Happy Kwanza. KEEP ON FLYING!- JT

Kaleigh Kennedy writes:

Have a GREAT holiday! Please keep working hard and I hope you all have a nice Christmas! You all work so hard, it is nice to get a break and spend time with your family and friends. HAVE A GREAT HOLIDAY EVERYONE!!!!!!

Front Cover

New Air Guard commander. . .
Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, (left)
The Adjutant General - New Jersey, passes the flag to Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson in a change of command ceremony held on Nov. 15 at the Joint Training and Training Development Center, Fort Dix. Gen. Falca-Dodson assumed command of the Headquarters, New Jersey Air National Guard. Photo by Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, NJDMAVA/PA. Story on page 7.

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The editorial content is edited, prepared and provided by the Public Affairs Office of the 108th Air Refueling Wing. All photographs are Air Force photographs unless otherwise indicated.

Odds & Ends...

Join annual visit to Vineland Vets home

Dec. 17 is the big day – our annual visit to the Vineland Veterans Home for the holidays.

Members of the wing will go to the home to visit with the veterans, give out holiday cards, candy canes and trade smiles.

The home has a ceramic shop with items for sale made by the veterans that make nice stocking stuffers, holiday gifts and decorations.

If you are interested in going on the trip, ask your supervisor. If you have any questions, call or e-mail Master Sgt. Steve Sabato, 609-754-5029. The bus will depart from building 33-33 at 9 a.m. and return to McGuire 3:30-4 p.m.

The home also has a Christmas wish list for a large variety of items for the veterans in the home, so they will have presents to fill their holidays. If you wish to bring some joy into the veterans holiday, check with Master Sgt. Sabato for the wish list.

Make a difference at ChalleNGe

Want to make a difference in a young person's life? Volunteer to be a mentor for the New Jersey Youth Challenge Academy. The Academy is looking for mentors that will help shape and develop 16-18 year olds into educated, well-rounded and productive citizens of New Jersey. Please contact 2nd Lt April Kelly/108RAW PAO at 609-754-6358 or e-mail april.kelly@njmcgu.af.mil for more details.

On the Calendar

December

| | |
|-----|----------------|
| 6-7 | UTA |
| 21 | Winter begins |
| 25 | Christmas |
| 31 | New Year's Eve |

January

| | |
|-------|----------------------------|
| 1 | New Year's Day |
| 10-11 | UTA |
| 19 | Martin Luther King Jr. Day |

February

| | |
|-----|------------------------------|
| 7-8 | UTA |
| 12 | Abraham Lincoln's birthday |
| 14 | Valentine's Day |
| 16 | President's Day |
| 22 | George Washington's birthday |

Calling All Singers!!

If you are interested in singing as a chorus, quintet, quartet, trio, duet or solo, contact Master Sgt. Lisel White at (609) 754-2109 or lwhite@njmcgu.af.mil.

Name, contact info, and if you are soprano, alto, tenor or baritone, should be included in the message.

108th Marksman team news

By Senior Master Sgt. Joseph H. Burkel
108th Marksmanship Team member

The 108th ARW Marksmanship Team competed in a High Power Rifle match on Nov. 23, at Central Jersey range in Jackson, N.J. Master Sgt. James Johnson placed first in the standing, sitting, and slow-fire prone positions in his class and took the overall win in the Sharpshooter classification. Anyone interested in joining the team should contact Senior Master Sgt. Joseph Burkel at 609-754-1392.

Equipment Management moved to 33-33

From Master Sgt. Denise Green
Equipment Manager

The Equipment Management Office has moved from the Supply building (33-69) to the Maintenance Hanger building (33-33) in the Flight Service Center Office. If you are out-processing, you need to come to building 33-33. Also, the phone number has changed to 609-754-3152.

Gala reunion planned for April 2009

Come one, come all – active or retired – for a fun-filled weekend with trips down memory lane. A Gala Reunion is being planned for all of the faces of the 170th and 108th Air Refueling Wing on April 25, 2009.

The elegant semi-formal affair will be held at the Doubletree Hotel and Executive Meeting Center, 200 Atrium Drive, Somerset, N.J., 6-11 p.m.

A deposit of \$50 is required per person as soon as possible. Hotel reservation, rates and activities will be announced at a later date.

For more information, contact Gloria A. Smith, 732-752-8263/732-991-9102 or Phyllis Jackson-Rackley, 908-451-7147/908-730-6377.

Wing Tips Deadline

The deadline for January *Wing Tips* is Dec. 29. Articles and photos should be e-mailed to: pa.108arw@njmcgu.af.mil. Please send the raw file. Articles must be in Microsoft Word format. Deadline for February *Wing Tips* is Jan. 26. Deadline for March *Wing Tips* is March 2.

Wing Tips is now accessible to unit members on the internet at <http://www.108arw.af.mil>.

Printed color copies will be distributed to buildings 3324, 3327, 3333, 3369 and 3390.

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New 204th Training Course Sets Precedent

By Staff Sgt. Brian Carson
Wing Tips co-editor

The 204th Intelligence Squadron began its new joint training class on Dec. 1.

This is a very unique and ground breaking course. The 204th is the first Air National Guard Intelligence Squadron that is solely dedicated to providing intelligence instruction and training products to Air Mobility Command. Also, it is the first course of its kind in the intelligence community that integrates active duty, Air National Guard, and reserve students.

"The mission statement, or purpose, of the 204th Intelligence Squadron is to provide the AMC with critical intelligence support, highly trained instructors, course developers and evaluators for the Mobility Air Force's Intelligence and Force Protection units (IFTU's)," said Chief Master Sgt. Stephen Zinner, Superintendent of the 204th Intelligence Squadron. "The IFTU mission is to prepare active duty, guard and reserve intelligence students who attend the Air Force Expeditionary Center for world-wide contingency deployments by providing them with the most up-to-date threat and force protection information."

The 204th was selected for this mission for a number of reasons; however, the main one was based on the continuity and stability that members of the 204th will provide.

"Due to the active duty deployment rotations, the 204th will be able to provide a level of continuity to the AMC," said Lt. Col. David Zink, the 204th Intelligence Squadron Commander. "Our 204th instructor staff will lend stability through our teaching and training requirements."

There will be a total of 15 instructors at the school house with 11 of those being on a full-time basis - the 204th will provide four instructors.

Given the historic and challenging nature of this course, the instructors who were tasked to teach it had to go through an intense and challenging process.

"We (instructors) had to attend a 2 1/2 week academic instructor course, complete a 180 hour internship that included 120 hours of teaching, 30 hours of curriculum development, and 30 hours of teaching qualifications," said Capt. Susan Elderhorst, Chief of Instructors for the 204th Intelligence Squadron. "We also had to take and pass a subject matter expert test, in addition to maintaining our regular 204th Intelligence Squadron qualifications."

In addition to having to meet all of these requirements, the instructors must also be evaluated three times and be rated at "excellent" or above by a subject matter expert, which they have all been.

Even though the school will have top-notch instructors who are experts in their field, the curriculum implementation process is not without its challenges.

The first class that starts on Dec. 1, will be considered a validation course, or trial run.

"Ninety-five percent of the students in the first class will be subject matter experts so that we can properly evaluate if the material being taught is accurate as to what is going on in the field," said Elderhorst. "If all goes well, the inaugural class will be in March of 2009".

Another possible concern of being part of the first joint training program are the challenges associated with working with all components of the Air Force to include, active, guard and reserve personnel.

Zinner states that this has not been an issue at all. "The entire process has been integrated very well. The initial goal was for this to be a successful total force initiative and that has been achieved."

Recycle those useable BDUs to the Civil Air Patrol

Now that the ABUs are filling your closet, what's happening to the BDUs and black boots that you used to wear? Before you start to tear the uniforms up to wash the car, there is a worthy cause that can use them. The New Jersey wing of the Civil Air Patrol is a civilian, non-profit organization and an auxiliary of the U.S. Air Force. There are more than 1,100 members in



the N.J. Wing, about half of them are cadets between the ages 12-21 and will wear the BDUs as part of their training.

The CAP program can give cadets a step up into their adult life – the first female pilot on the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration team, Maj. Nicole Malachowski, and the first female solo pilot in the Thunderbirds, Maj. Samantha Glinski Weeks, both got their start in CAP.

Uniform items can be dropped at the CAP N.J. Wing headquarters on McGuire Air Force Base, building 3412 on Neely Road (around the corner from the McGuire Medical Clinic).

Duty hours are Monday and Wednesday through Friday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Tuesday noon to 9 p.m. For more information, call (609) 723-8200 or e-mail hq@njwgc.cap.gov.

For more information about the Civil Air Patrol in New Jersey, visit www.njwgc.cap.org.

New Members take over the Junior Enlisted Council

By Tech. Sgt. Dee Eggles

Former Enlisted Council vice president

It is my pleasure to announce the new board members for the Junior Enlisted Council:

President – Staff Sgt. Roberto Oquendo

Vice President – Tech. Sgt. Joseph Pomphrey

Treasurer – Airman 1st Class Thomas Foulds

Secretary – Airman 1st Class Christopher Krampitz

Congratulations to all!

During the past few years the council has accomplished many things, including:

- Coat drives, Holiday Angel tree, and basket give-aways, which have benefited the local community such as the Children's Home, Mt. Holly; Transitional Housing Service, Mt. Holly; McGuire Knights of Columbus; and St. Ann's Church Soup Kitchen
- Car washes
- Hosted a Wing Hail and Farewell
- Took part in the R-model ceremony by creating the T-shirts and coins
- Hosted a luncheon for our Security Forces before they deployed

- Sponsored several sporting events and donated the money to the Vineland Veterans Memorial Home, the National Guard Association and the Freedom Alliance Scholarship Fund.

From Staff Sgt. Roberto Oquendo

Current Enlisted Council president

The Junior Enlisted Council will be holding a council meeting at 1 p.m. in building 33-33 (MXG Conference Room) on Saturday, Dec. 6.

In this meeting, we will assign committees to help run the different activities that we hold throughout the new calendar year. It would be appreciated if representation from each squadron is there.

The Junior Enlisted Council is one of the most active and visible groups in the 108th. Established in 1997, the purpose is to act as a liaison between the 108th Commander and the junior enlisted members, encouraging a spirit of camaraderie and unity among all members.

All members of the wing Tech. Sgt. and below are welcome to come to the meetings and to participate in the activities.



The guys are in charge now. . . . The new board members of the Junior Enlisted Council pose for the camera. From left to right, Airman 1st Class Thomas Foulds, treasurer; Tech. Sgt. Joseph Pomphrey, vice president; Staff Sgt. Roberto Oquendo, president; and Airman 1st Class Christopher Krampitz, secretary. Photo by Staff Sgt. Brian Carson, 108th ARW PAO.

ESGR opened nominaton season for Freedom Award

From the New Jersey ESGR office

The Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve has opened the nomination season for the 2009 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

In 2007, New Jersey received 61 nominations for this prestigious award. All nominees were treated to a luncheon by NJESGR, where the nominees were awarded an Above and Beyond Award. Also, three nominees were honored at the Governor's mansion with the Pro Patria Award and one of the nominees won the Freedom Award, which was presented in Washington, DC.

National Guard and Reserve members and their families are eligible and encouraged to nominate employers who have gone above and beyond in their support of military employees. Nominations will be accepted at www.FreedomAward.mil from Nov. 3, 2008 to Jan. 19,

2009. Be sure to take this opportunity to recognize those employers who also make sacrifices.

For questions regarding the Freedom Award nomination process, visit www.FreedomAward.mil or contact Beth Sherman, ESGR Public Affairs, at 703-380-9717. You can also contact the New Jersey ESGR office at 609-562-0157/0156/0158.



Make your holiday bright - and safe

From the 108th Safety Office

The Holiday season is upon us. This is a time of joy but there is also an element of danger. To keep your holiday season joyful, here are a few tips from your Safety Office.

Christmas along with Hanukkah is undoubtedly the highlight of the holiday season. Gatherings of people, food, drink, fancy clothing, candles, decorations and the fireplace are all part of these events.

A Few Suggestions

- Be sure to test your smoke detectors.
- Clean the oven and stove prior to the holiday. Often the extra load on these appliances causes a fire due to the high use and extra grease build-up.
- Keep kitchen clutter away from the stove and oven.
- Be extra careful with matches and candles. Candles should be made of flame retardant materials - look for a label stating such.
- Avoid loose, flammable clothing. Clothing often catches on fire around candles, matches, fireplaces and stoves (both electric and gas).
- Keep decorations away from sources of heat such as open

flames, electric heaters and exposed electric bulbs.

- Don't overload electric outlets. Inspect electrical cords and light sets. If in doubt - throw them out.

Christmas Trees

- Keep your Christmas tree in a sturdy base filled with water and check the water level daily.
- Spraying the Christmas tree with a flame retardant is always a good idea.
- Make a fresh cut on the trunk of your tree and place in a sturdy holder.
- Place the tree away from heat sources, such as fireplaces and heaters.
- Do not use candles on or near the tree.
- Safely dispose of your tree before it becomes dangerously dry; however, never burn tree or tree parts in your fireplace.

Holiday Lights

- Purchase only UL approved lights.
- Check all indoor and outdoor lights for frayed cords, replace if necessary.



Safety Tips

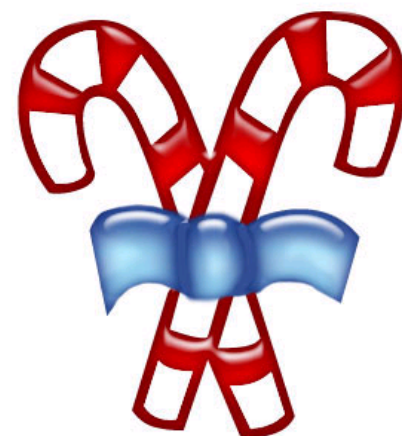
- Never use lights that have an empty socket.
- Lights should not touch combustible materials.
- Use only outdoor lights for "outdoors"
- Turn off all holiday lights, prior to leaving your home or going to bed.
- Mini lights are safest because they produce less heat.
- Avoid using extension cords, but if you do follow instructions carefully.
- Do not overload electrical circuits, such as wall outlets and extension cords, use a circuit strip.

Toys wanted for Santa to give children in Cooper Medical

By Charles A. Beam

108th Environmental Coordinator

It's that time of year again! Santa has given me a call requesting toys for those boys and girls who are in the hospital at Cooper Medical Center in Camden. So, I'm out begging for gifts for the children of Cooper's. I'm sorry for the short notice. If you care to donate, I'll be collecting the gifts on Tuesday, Dec. 9. The gifts shouldn't cost anymore than \$10. **UNLESS YOU WANT TO SPEND MORE \$\$.** I'll leave that up to each of you personally. I will not be in my office, but you can contact me at 609-306-6917 or 609-351-0297. Dec. 9 is the last day I can make pick-up. Toys will be dropped off on Dec. 10 at Cooper. Once again, I want to thank everyone for opening up your hearts to others and for helping me keep this program going for more than 17 years.



Jersey Air Guard gets first female commander

By Tech. Sgt. Mark Olsen, 177FW/PA

Here in New Jersey, the Air National Guard received its first woman commander.

Brig. Gen. Maria Falca-Dodson assumed command of nearly 2,300 Airmen of the New Jersey Air National Guard, which includes the 108th Air Refueling Wing at McGuire Air Force Base, the 177th Fighter Wing at Egg Harbor Township and Joint Force Headquarter-New Jersey (Air Component) at Fort Dix in a Change of Command ceremony at the Joint Training and Training Development Center, located at Fort Dix on Nov. 15.

Outgoing NJANG Commander Brig. Gen. Lawrence S. Thomas III noted that: "This is long overdue, not just for women in general but for Maria herself."

"It's an honor to be given this responsibility," said Brig. Gen. Falca-Dodson. "I pledge to lead and support you fully and I thank you for your belief in me, guidance and support."

The General, prior to assuming command, served as the first female Deputy Adjutant General to The Adjutant General of New Jersey, Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth at the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs located in Lawrenceville. She was appointed on March 1, 2002. In

2004, she became the first woman to pin on general's stars in the New Jersey National Guard.

"Make no mistake; she's a Soldier and an Airman first. During her time as a deputy, she didn't always get the glorious jobs. But every issue she took and every project that was handed to her was carried out," said Maj. Gen. Rieth. "And there were a lot of things that needed to be carried out during that time."

General Falca-Dodson provided oversight and management to more than 8,300 members of the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard, as well as state operations of the Department during the nearly seven years she served as the Deputy Adjutant General. During that time, the New Jersey Army and Air National Guard mobilized more than 7,000 Soldiers and Airmen in support of Operations' Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita efforts and Operation Jump Start.

She also had direct responsibility for the Army and Air full time operations, Strength, New Jersey National Guard Training Center, Ethics, and the Office of Military Affairs which includes Public Affairs, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve and Government

Relations. She was Chair of the Long Range Planning Executive Steering Committee, the Efficiencies and Revenue Steering Committee; the Weapons of Mass Destruction Advisory Committee, is the TAG designee for the Domestic Security Preparedness Task Force and was Co-Chair of the Nursing Shortage Task Force in 2002.

The General attended the College of New Jersey (formerly Trenton State College) and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing in 1975. Seven years later, she earned a Master of Arts in Administration from Central Michigan University.

General Falca-Dodson began her military career in 1980 when she was commissioned as a first lieutenant with the 108th Tactical Fighter Wing, New Jersey Air National Guard. In 1993, she received her Chief Nurse Badge serving with the 108th Medical Squadron. Five years later, she assumed Command of the 108th Air Refueling Wing Medical Group. General Falca-Dodson has participated in multiple overseas deployments and was deployed as the Medical Commander, Task Force Fuertos Caminos, Panama, 1993.

November's promotions and medals

During the November UTA, the following promotions given and awards were presented.

Promoted to Lieutenant Colonel:

Sean Logan
Steven Moraes
Michael Schiavone

Promoted to First Lieutenant:

Walter F. Dragon

Air Medal

Maj. Timothy Baughman
Staff Sgt. Samantha Gerofsky

Meritorious Service Medal

Lt. Col. Matt Baker
Master Sgt. James Massano

Air Force Commendation Medal

Master Sgt. Gregory Stevens
Master Sgt. Louis Conzo II
Master Sgt. Roberto Oquendo

Master Sgt. Patrick Basnett

Tech. Sgt. Joseph Landree

Tech. Sgt. Grenille Boodramsingh

Tech. Sgt. Kenneth Cruz

Air Force Achievement Medal

Master Sgt. Gregory Stevens

Tech. Sgt. Christopher Jones

Tech. Sgt. Edward McGhee

Tech. Sgt. Michael Biggs

Staff Sgt. Samantha Gerofsky

Senior Airman Samantha Carnevale

Senior Airman Jose Monge

Senior Airman Schweitzer Beuns

Senior Airman Desiree Delagarza

Senior Airman Brian Hammell

Senior Airman Mike McBride

New Jersey Commendation Medal

Senior Master Sgt. Joseph Burkel

Master Sgt. Spiro Panagakos

Master Sgt. Monica Holder

Master Sgt. Raymond Miller

Tech. Sgt. Thomas Pruss

Staff Sgt. Jared Whalen

150th ARS has a long, proud history

Col. Kevin J. Keehn
Commander, 108th Operations Group

At the end of March 2008, the Operations Group had to deactivate the 150th Air Refueling Squadron due to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission recommendation. The downsizing required us to cut some positions. This was done through retirements, transfers and some who left on their ETS.

Fortunately, the majority of our pilots, boom operators, admin and life support personnel flowed to the 141st Air Refueling Squadron. At a later date, there will be an official transfer of the 150th ARS to another mission.

For now, I would like to offer a brief history of the 150th and some of its major contributions and accomplishments:

The unit began in 1956 at Newark Airport flying the C-46 Commando as part of the Air Transport Command (ATS). The C-46's primary mission was troop and cargo transport. The C-46 was retired in 1958 and was replaced by the C-119 Flying Boxcar or "Old Shaky" as it was affectionately known. Becoming part of Military Air Transport Command (MATC) in 1960, the unit continued to fly the C-119 through late 1961 when it converted to the C-121 Constellation, or Connie. The C-121 primarily flew Air Evac missions out of Southeast Asia and airlift support both for NATO and MATC throughout Northern Africa.

In the summer of 1965, the unit moved from Newark Airport to its present home at McGuire Air Force Base. In 1966, MATC changed to the Military Airlift Command (MAC). In 1971, the unit was notified that it would again be changing aircraft. The new aircraft would be the C-141. Along with the C-141, came notification that they would become an associate unit. Not wanting to lose the unit's heritage of true Citizen-Soldiers, the unit said no to the associate designation and ceased the conversion. A very gutsy

call on the unit's part. The Air Force could have easily just shut them down.

In 1973, the unit was assigned the C-7 Caribou. Its new mission became airdrop and tactical airlift. Santa "Bou" became a normal fixture at Christmas. The C-7 nose would be painted like Santa and the aircraft was flown around the state. It would then land at McGuire and Santa would step out of the plane for the Christmas party.

The unit was notified in April of 1977 that it would be changing major commands and be re-designated as the 150th Air Refueling Squadron, 170th Air Refueling Group. The unit



would be receiving the KC-135A Stratotanker and become part of the Strategic Air Command. Air refueling, support of the nuclear triad and 24/7 hard alert would become the unit's new missions. This was significant for the unit because it entered them into the jet age and secured a long-term future for the unit.

The unit flew the "A" model until 1983 when it began its conversion to the KC-135E. In 1993 the 170th was notified – so much for long term – that it would be losing its flag and would

be combined with the 108th Air Refueling Wing to form a two squadron tanker super wing. For the next 15 years the 150th would proudly serve the country.

BRAC changed things in 2005. The 108th found out it would be going to one squadron and the 150th would be closing its doors. As an air refueling squadron the 150th had a proud heritage. Listed below are some of its major contributions:

- 1989- Stateside support for Hurricane Hugo victims
- 1990- Operation Desert Shield – deployed to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- 1991- Operation Desert Storm – various deployment locations
- 1992- Stateside support for Hurricane Andrew victims
- 1999- Noble Anvil – Turkey/Germany
- 2001- Operation Enduring Freedom – Thumrait, Oman
- 2003- Operation Iraqi Freedom – Spain/Azores
- 2005- Flew first Air Evac mission for NJANG in KC-135E
- 2005- Stateside support for Hurricane Katrina victims
- More than 52 years of accident free flying

Never did a call go out that the men and women of the 150th did not answer. Their accomplishments over the years have been both needed and noteworthy. They have provided outstanding service to both our state and nation. For those of you that are reading this and were part of the 150th, I would like to thank each and every one of you. You should be proud of what you have done as members of the 150th. I want to thank you all for your hard work and the sacrifices you have endured to complete the mission. Your contributions to the operations group will not be forgotten.

PERSCO goes to Afghanistan

By Master Sgt. Malakatu Saleem and Staff Sgt. Gretchen Hayes

We are members of the 108th Mission Support Flight and recently returned from a tour in support of the war effort. Our tour took us to Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan. We deployed from April 28-July 11, 2008.

Do you know what PERSCO is or what it does? We're sure there are many people who do not. PERSCO stands for Personnel Support for Contingency Operations and that is one of the war-time functions of the military support flight.

During a deployment, it is the responsibility of the PERSCO team to account for every Airman in the Area of Responsibility. PERSCO's customers are Air Force unit commanders, for whom they provide

the right individuals in quantity and AFSCs to get the job done.

The moment a deployed member arrives in theater, the first person they see should be from the PERSCO team. The PERSCO team member will collect their ID card and in-process them into the system. This will enable the Air Force to account for who is on the ground.

Our typical day started out by reviewing incoming and outgoing chinks. This gave us an opportunity to prepare the briefings for the personnel. As personnelists, we are responsible for running numerous reports for the commanders. These reports included, but were not limited to, alpha rosters, manning documents, and various other reports using special systems for the process.

Shifts for the PERSCO team members are long and customers are often agitated because of long flights and little sleep. We relied on the training we received at home station to get through the tough days. Our home station training of operating and performing assigned duties while donning a gas mask or being armed with a weapon actually came into practice.

It is true, that the life and duties of a personnelist are very different than that of an aviator, aircraft mechanic or security forces specialist, but nonetheless, we play a very important role in the war effort.

Our experience in Bagram Afghanistan was definitely a learning experience. It is one that everyone should experience and one that we would readily welcome again.

Moore walks 60 miles to benefit breast cancer

*By Master Sgt. Jill M. Moore
First Sgt. for Wing and Operations*

In May, I signed up to walk in the "Breast Cancer 3 Day Benefiting Susan G. Koman for the Cure" 60-mile walk in Washington, D.C. to be held Oct. 3-5. Several friends have endured the ravages of the disease and this was my chance to do something to help find a cure.

I knew I had to train for the walk because I was to walk an average of 20 miles a day, 3 days in a row. For months I walked 6-10 miles every day, building up to the end result of 18 to 20 miles.

I arrived at the starting location on Oct. 3 psyched and ready to tackle this grueling feat. I was amazed at what I saw - 3,000 people showed up for the walk. Each and every one had their own personal reason to put themselves through this walk. Some were survivors, some had family or friends with the disease and some just felt the need to help fight for the cause. The opening ceremony was touching and brought home the

realization of how big this disease is and the need to find a cure.

As I walked the first day, I met a lot of people who would tell me their stories and it helped motivate me to the finish line for that day. On the second day, as I now had a blister on my foot that was wrapped and aches in muscles I didn't know I had - the people that were not walkers, but spectators or people driving by thanking me for what I was doing, was my motivation.



On the third day, with more blisters but less aches, my motivation came from a volunteer directing traffic at the bottom of a mile long hill I was about to trek up.

She said would you rather walk up that hill or have chemo treatments? That statement was enough to get me through the day.

At the closing ceremony every walker took one shoe off and held it up in honor of all those who walked 60 long miles in 3 days to find a cure for breast cancer. It was an emotional ending to the day.

More than \$7 million was raised by the 3,000 walkers. I am proud to say I got to be part of this event. The walk is held in 14 different cities and I plan to walk in Philadelphia next year. If anyone is interested in walking with me or has questions about the event, see me during any drill. You won't be sorry.

Master Sgt. Jill Moore, First Sgt. for Wing and Operations, stands in front of the White House during her 3-Day, 60-mile walk for breast cancer in October. Courtesy photo.

Jersey Air Guard retirees gather for luncheon

By retired Chief Master Sgt. Craig Czarnecki

The semi-annual luncheon of NJANG Retirees (NJANG Dinosaurs) was held at Moore's Tavern in Freehold on Oct. 22. This attendance gathered more than 40 members of the units. Many "war stories" were traded as well as unforgotten memories that we all experienced during our time in the New Jersey Guard. Our next luncheon is tentatively planned for May 2009. Anyone interested in attending should contact Mel Sylvester at nuffsaidmel@aol.com, 609-298-5970 or Rich Donovan at donovan@exit109.com, 732-223-2051 or 732-223-4445.



Jurassic Park New Jersey style. . . The NJANG Dinosaurs gather at Moore's Tavern, Freehold for food, friendship and reminiscing on Oct. 22. Photo by retired Chief Master Sgt. Craig Czarnecki

Air Guard deployers to be honored with 'Salute Campaign'

*By Air Force Master Sgt. Mike R. Smith
National Guard Bureau*

11/24/2008 - **LANSDOWNE, Va.** — One of the largest Airmen recognition endeavors in Air National Guard history was announced here Thursday by the Air Guard's senior enlisted member.

Chief Master Sgt. Richard Smith, command chief of the Air Guard, said the Air Guard's Hometown Heroes Salute Campaign will soon honor what could be more than 70,000 Citizen-Airmen who have deployed in contingencies since 9/11.

The announcement was made to the Guard's adjutants general, Air Guard commanders and command chief master sergeants at a senior leadership conference outside Washington.

"We have not properly recognized our Airmen," Smith told them. He asked for their support with the program and explained that local units have done a great job of recognizing groups, but that some individual deployments have been shorted proper recognition.

The Air National Guard will soon launch the National Guard Bureau-funded campaign nationwide in cooperation with the states. It will recognize those eligible Airmen who deployed for more than 30

consecutive days for Operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, Hurricane Katrina and "all other contingency operations."

In 2009, Smith said the campaign will first recognize every eligible Airman since 9/11. They should receive a cherry wood encased letter of appreciation signed by former Air Guard Director, Gen. Craig R. McKinley, now chief of the National Guard Bureau, and Smith, enclosed with a commemorative coin.

"The first year we want to hit the masses. We want to go back and fix what was not there," said Smith. A complete, three-tiered recognition system will start in 2010 that, in addition to the above signed by the current Air Guard director and command chief, will award a framed American flag with inset coins for succeeding deployments of 180-365 consecutive days, and an eagle statuette for deployments more than 366 consecutive days.

Although Airmen can earn all three awards, they cannot receive an award more than once. "It's also thanks families, communities and employers," said Chief Master Sgt. Christopher Muncy, Ohio's command chief, who helped Smith explain the program to conferees.

He said spouses will also receive a "Hometown Heroes Salute"-engraved pen and pencil set, and their children will receive a set of personalized dog tags. Airmen can also decide on a "center of influence" in their community and present that person or organization with a special medallion of appreciation. Muncy pointed out that the coin designs were developed by enlisted Airmen in the field. "The bottom line is that it's the right thing to do for our Airmen," Muncy said.

Current plans are to launch the program in January with policy letters sent to the Air Guard's command chiefs.

Hometown Heroes Salute program manager, Linda Mauro Brooks, said a Web-based ordering system and an information site will be online soon.

Smith, who will soon retire after serving 37 years in the Air Guard, with the last four years as command chief, said he could not think of a better program to help introduce during his final days in Washington.

"This job is about taking care of Airmen, and that's what makes a command chief successful," he said. "This (program) is just a small token of appreciation to thank our Airmen, their families and communities."